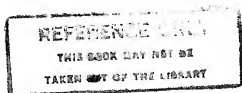


Resettling Refugees: the lessons of research

by Simon Field



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REPORT

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Foreword

Britain has a long history of receiving refugees from other countries. In the early 1970s a number of Asians living in Uganda came to Britain as refugees, and more recently there has been an influx of nearly 20,000 refugees from South East Asia, particularly from Vietnam. This last group was particularly disadvantaged, and they have experienced difficulties in entering the British labour market. In central government, and in the voluntary agencies which have played a central role in the resettlement of refugees, there has been a growing recognition of the need to learn from past experience with refugee groups in Britain, and from the experience of other countries which resettle refugees. This review of the research literature is one contribution to this process.

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1 Introduction

The last ten or fifteen years have witnessed substantial flows of refugees into Western countries as a result of a series of crises in the third world. Refugees have fled to the West from East Africa, from the southern zone of Latin America, the Caribbean, and most of all, from South East Asia. Refugee movements in other parts of the world — such as out of Afghanistan — have continued on a large scale, but have received less attention in Western countries. These refugees have, collectively, been termed 'new refugees', to indicate their difference from previous groups of refugees from developed countries, such as those who fled from Nazi Germany before and during the war, the 'displaced persons' who were left as refugees after the war, and those who left Hungary after the events of 1956. The new refugees have been greater in number, and have experienced more difficulty in resettling than previous groups, mainly because of the greater economic, racial and cultural differences which have separated their countries of origin from the developed countries where they have been settled. Moreover while refugees in the post-war period benefited from the strong demand for labour at that time, the settlement of new refugees has been hampered by the less favourable worldwide economic conditions of more recent years. Large scale refugee movements from third world countries are not new — one only has to cite the migration of Muslims and Hindus which followed the partition of the Indian sub-continent on independence. However the resettlement of large numbers of refugees from the third world in the developed world is a new phenomenon, and it is this phenomenon which, more accurately, is indicated by the term 'new refugee'.

Partly as a result of this new experience, there has been a growing recognition of the need for research on refugees and their resettlement. Resettlement programmes in Western countries have often been set up on an ad hoc basis, on the assumption that the influx of a particular group of refugees is an event without parallel which will not recur. Jones (1982) makes the point:

All too often it is thought that new refugee situations are isolated, deviant and non-recurring. A direct consequence of such beliefs has been the common failure in refugee programmes to learn from the lessons of the past, a failure to develop an institutional memory, and a constant need, in connection with each new situation, to re-invent the wheel. In the United Kingdom the Vietnamese programme has been characterised by a plethora of temporary measures designed to cope with transitory problems rather than a planned and co-ordinated long term policy.

Research on refugees might help to meet this problem, by identifying issues in the resettlement process where useful generalisations can be drawn despite the variations in both refugee groups and the institutions and social structures of the countries of resettlement. The aim of this paper is to draw lessons from research conducted in a number of countries for resettlement policy in Britain. Western countries vary in the structure of central and local government, in the role of the voluntary sector in refugee resettlement, in the nature and funding of welfare benefits, medical care and social services, and in the structure of local labour and housing markets. It is unrealistic to expect international research on refugees to solve the many problems of refugee resettlement which are specific to the idiosyncrasies of one such institution in one country like Britain. The value of international experience and research conducted in a number of countries lies more in the prospect of identifying broad principles underlying the refugee experience and the process of resettlement, principles which can then be applied to the specific problems of resettling refugees in Britain. The choice of material to be included in this report is guided by these considerations, the main aim being to survey those aspects of the research literature where clear lessons for British resettlement policy emerge. This approach naturally entails that some important elements in resettlement policy will pass undiscussed, and the report does not constitute a comprehensive survey of the refugee literature.

This report is primarily concerned with relatively large and sudden influxes of refugees, which have usually been subject to specific resettlement policies on the part of government, not least because their reception and resettlement have involved significant government expenditure, controlled directly or channelled through the voluntary agencies. In addition to such groups, there is a small but constant flow of refugees from a wide variety of countries into Britain. These are usually described as 'trickle' refugees, and although they often receive help from the refugee agencies, they are not subject to systematic resettlement programmes. Apart from Vietnamese refugees, 460 persons were granted refugee status or asylum in their own right by the United Kingdom during 1984 (Home Office, 1985).

Definitions

The internationally accepted definition of a refugee is that adopted in a 1951 United Nations Convention. A refugee is a person who:

...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of nationality and is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.

Britain has in the past granted 'asylum' to victims of persecution quite apart from international treaty obligations. However their status is very similar to that conferred by recognition as a refugee, and all successful asylum applicants are now automatically granted full refugee status. Some persons whose applications for asylum are refused are also allowed 'exceptional' leave to enter or remain in Britain for 12 months at a time. Their status is in a sense that of temporary refugees.

The UNHCR definition of a refugee is fairly broad. The critical term is 'persecution'. In many countries — perhaps all — particular social groups experience 'persecution' of varying severity ranging from mild discrimination to genocide. All these groups are potential refugees under the UN definition, although they would require any receiving country to acknowledge their tribulations as sufficiently severe to warrant the description 'persecution'. In some cases there is room for considerable variation in the perception of who is a 'refugee', for it will depend on an essentially political judgement about whether the regime of a given country 'persecute' individuals in that country. The point may be illustrated by recent debate in the United States about whether certain migrants from Haiti and more recently Central America should be treated as refugees in a similar manner to those who have fled Cuba; (see for example Lehmann, 1980). This is not simply a matter of nomenclature, for there are a range of international conventions and legal obligations which attach to refugees and their treatment. Prominent among these is the principle of 'non-refoulement', that refugees should not be returned against their will to their country of origin. The importance of this principle has been affirmed by a number of international bodies, and it is, in effect, part of domestic law in the United States.

A large proportion of refugees — particularly new refugees — are forced migrants. Indeed, in common parlance, this is what is commonly understood by a refugee, a person who has fled persecution which is, or would be, manifestly intolerable, or who has literally been driven from the country. The Asians who were instructed by Idi Amin to leave Uganda and the Jews who left Nazi Germany are examples. While voluntary migrants often base their decision to migrate on the hope of bettering themselves materially, and for that reason often come from the working classes, refugees may be drawn from all classes. Some groups are conspicuously middle-class (Bernard, 1977).

However among some refugee groups there is an element of choice in their migration. The life of a resettling refugee is a hard one, and flight itself may be dangerous. Some people may prefer to accept a degree of persecution as an alternative to flight. This is most obvious in a case like the Hungarian refugees, since only a small proportion of those who might have left Hungary following the Budapest uprising in fact did so. Referring to the classifications of migration theory, (described in Kunz, 1973) this particular group of refugees, although not strictly 'forced' migrants, are 'pushed' rather than 'pulled' migrants.

In practice some persons regarded as refugees will not be so. It has been suggested that a number of those who succeeded in leaving South Vietnam for the United States before the fall of Saigon lacked the kind of government or military connections which might reasonably have led to a fear of persecution at the hands of the communist government. Kelly (1977) quotes one American official as saying "Half the Vietnamese we intended to get out did not get out — and half who did get out should not have". In the months and weeks leading up to the fall of Saigon, the US government was unwilling to engage in open planning for refugee selection and evacuation, since this would only have further subverted confidence in the government of South Vietnam. The final evacuation was inevitably rather haphazard. In fact this reflects a general problem in planning for an expected influx of refugees: making such plans public can itself have an impact on the problems which might lead to the refugee emergency, by demonstrating that a national government is not confident that the emergency can be avoided.

The general implication here is that refugee research needs to bear in mind the wide variation in the application of the term 'refugee'. The refugees referred to in the literature constitute the group which receiving countries have decided to treat as refugees. It is this group which becomes the object of study.

Refugee influxes: classification

It has already been emphasised that the experiences of particular refugee groups are rarely unique. Nevertheless, attempts to draw lessons from research on particular refugee groups — the aim of this report — must be guided and qualified by a recognition of the diversity of such groups. A useful first step here is to attempt a classification of refugee influxes, by indicating the main characteristics of refugee groups which affect resettlement. This classification is not strictly applicable to the refugee groups themselves but, in order to render it relevant to resettlement policy, is one which is relative to the country of resettlement — in this case Britain. The proposed set of characteristics affecting the resettlement of a particular group are as follows:

1. White or other skin colour.
2. Language and literacy.
3. The transferability of employment skills and experience.
4. Culture and customs: differences from the receiving country.
5. A pre-existing community of the same ethnic group.
6. Historical circumstances behind the flight of the refugees.
7. The timing of the refugee flow.
8. The total number of refugees to be resettled.

1 White or other skin colour

Many refugees who are non-white may, like other ethnic minority groups who are not white, experience racial discrimination in employment, housing and

the provision of services. It appears that this discrimination is attributable to skin colour rather than to mere foreign origin. (See for example McIntosh and Smith, 1974.)

2 Language and literacy

Low standards of written or spoken English inevitably create difficulties for immigrants and refugees in Britain. In the recent PSI survey of racial minorities Brown (1984) reports that among male workers of Asian origin who spoke English slightly or not at all, over two thirds were in semi-skilled or unskilled manual work, while only one fifth of those who spoke English fluently were similarly placed. Ability to learn English will depend in part on whether the refugee speaks a language akin to it. Familiarity with Latin script will obviously be helpful. If refugees cannot read or write in their own language (as has been the case with a number of South East Asian refugees) literacy in English will obviously be an extremely difficult goal.

3 Transferable employment skills and experience

This is of obvious importance. It should be noted that the transferability of employment skills does not necessarily go hand in hand with similarity of culture. The Ugandan Asians, for example, differed enormously from most people living in Britain in cultural terms, but the mercantile skills they acquired in East Africa have transferred fairly readily to Britain.

4 Culture and customs

Many refugee groups will have cultures, customs and religions which are very different from those of the receiving country. Although it has sometimes been claimed that this can create a psychological problem of 'culture conflict' particularly for the children and younger generation of immigrants, who are 'between two cultures', the present author has argued elsewhere that this problem has been much overstated (Field, 1984). However it is undoubtedly the case that the cultural characteristics of particular groups, including refugees, need to be taken into account by agencies responsible for delivering services to those groups, if their needs are to be adequately met.

5 Pre-existing community of the same ethnic group

If a refugee group arrives in a country where there already exists a community of their ethnic or national group, the problems of resettlement may be significantly eased. Existing communities will in many cases offer practical help and advice to the new refugees, offering all the support of an established community which the refugees themselves might take many years to develop.

The Ugandan Asian refugees, for example, obtained much help from the Asian community in Britain. However the variety of social divisions between groups of the same ethnic or national origin can be an inhibiting factor. There is little evidence that refugees from Vietnam have received much assistance from the British Chinese community, despite a common language and ethnic origin in many cases; more surprisingly, the long-established Vietnamese community in France was not substantially involved in the recent resettlement of refugees from Vietnam, apparently because of strong political differences with the newly arrived group.

6 The historical circumstances behind the flight of refugees

A major distinction drawn here is that between 'acute' refugees who flee in response to an actual state of affairs, and 'anticipatory' refugees who flee in response to anticipated persecution. The significance of this distinction is that anticipatory refugees will often have had more time to plan their departure, and will be less likely to have directly experienced trauma and violence than 'acute' refugees. Acute and, less often, anticipatory refugees may have personally experienced or witnessed violence, torture and rape. Close relatives and friends have sometimes been the victims, and may have been left behind to an unknown fate. Many acute refugees will therefore not only have extremely traumatic memories, but will also fear for the current position of relatives and friends in the country of origin. In addition to the immediate circumstances behind refugee flight, broader historical considerations will affect resettlement prospects. Many refugees flee from a persecution related to their ethnic minority status. As with the Ugandan Asians, their country of origin, with which they retain cultural ties, may not be their country of birth. In this case flight will not be experienced as a loss of 'home' in the full sense of the word. Moreover their experience as an ethnic minority over many years may grant their community the resilience to cope effectively with resettlement in a further country, where again they will be an ethnic minority. A prominent example here is the Jews, where persecution experienced over many years has engendered a preparedness to move on where necessary and the ability to make a success of their new home. This last kind of refugee often contrasts with those who have fled persecution resulting from their opposition to an oppressive regime, rather than from their ethnic origin. Such political refugees, like those from Soviet Bloc countries or Latin America, often know no home apart from their country of birth, and even when they have lived for many years in the country of resettlement, they hope for a change in the political regime of their native country which would allow them to return. The expectation of return inevitably has a significant impact on their lives in the country of resettlement; Bernard (1977) argues that among some refugees, such as the Cubans, this expectation may reduce their chance of putting down roots.

7 The timing of the refugee flow

Refugees fleeing an oppressive regime often leave in a steady trickle. 'Anticipatory' refugees leave more and more rapidly as the feared event approaches,

while acute refugees can arrive in very large numbers over a very short space of time. Policies for refugee resettlement must take account of these factors. In general it will be more difficult to resettle a group of refugees of any number who arrive over a short space of time, partly because resettlement procedures will have to be established very quickly, partly because there will be no time to modify resettlement policies in response to experience, and partly because it will not be possible for 'early' refugees to assist in the resettlement of those who come later.

8 The total number of refugees to be resettled

Large and small refugee groups present different resettlement issues. For a large group the practical problems of resettlement will be proportionately large, and there will be more difficulty in finding the jobs, houses and other support that refugees need, particularly if the group is concentrated in certain parts of the country. Conversely, a small group will require fewer resources to support resettlement, but, particularly if the group is spread around the country, it may be more difficult to provide specialised services to that group, and they may lack the network of community support which would emerge from larger concentrations of the refugee group. This last issue is one which will receive extensive discussion in this paper. From the viewpoint of government, larger groups of refugees may merit a specially established programme and special funding arrangements. Smaller groups may escape this attention, and while they may be assisted by the refugee agencies, are unlikely to receive the same systematic consideration.

This classification is certainly not definitive, but is intended as a broad guide to some of the more important distinctions between different refugee influxes. They highlight the fact that 'new' refugees from the third world face considerably more difficulties in resettlement than traditional refugees, since many new refugees are disadvantaged by skin colour, language, and employment skills, and are often very different in culture. On the same basis, refugees from Vietnam who have come to Britain have faced as many resettlement problems as any group is ever likely to meet.

2 Resettlement policy in Britain and the role of the voluntary agencies

Resettlement policy in Britain

Three voluntary agencies play a particularly significant role in the resettlement of refugees in Britain: the British Refugee Council (formerly the British Council for Aid to Refugees) the Ockenden Venture and Refugee Action (an offshoot of Save the Children Fund). Each has its own traditions and different ways of working with refugees. While the three agencies have worked in parallel in the past, the British Refugee Council is now regarded as an umbrella organisation and government funds are channelled to the other agencies through it.

During the 1970s, prior to the arrival of the Vietnamese refugees, Britain had received groups of Chilean and Ugandan Asian refugees. The Chilean programme involved about 3,000 refugees, and finance was provided by the Home Office through a Joint Working Group of the voluntary agencies. Voluntary agencies involved included not only some of the traditional refugee bodies, but also bodies such as Chile Committee for Human Rights, and the Chile Solidarity Campaign. The reception and resettlement of Ugandan Asians was a larger exercise, involving about 30,000 refugees. The Uganda Resettlement Board was set up in August 1972 to receive the refugees. While the Board involved representatives of the voluntary agencies, it was ultimately controlled and funded by the Home Office. Sixteen reception camps were set up to house the refugees initially. Many of the refugees found their own housing, but the Board itself housed a minority of refugees. In doing so it adopted a conscious policy of dispersal, seeking to settle refugees away from areas classified as 'red', where there were already substantial Asian communities. The arguments for and against such a dispersal policy, and the Ugandan Asian experience, are discussed later.

Refugees from Vietnam first came to this country during 1975 following the fall of Saigon. Until 1979 they arrived in relatively small numbers, mainly when a British ship had rescued small boats containing people who had fled Vietnam, but in January 1979 it was agreed to admit a quota of 1,500 refugees from Hong Kong (which was the destination of many of the boats leaving Vietnam) and from refugee camps in Malaysia and Thailand. The refugee crisis worsened rapidly during the course of the year, and a conference was organised by the UN in Geneva during July. At the conference Britain agreed to accept a further 10,000 refugees from those in camps in Hong Kong, and by the end of the year more than 6,000 of these had arrived. Since the quota was

filled, the flow of refugees from Vietnam has continued, although more slowly. Recent arrivals have either resulted from boat rescues or have involved family reunions and, by the end of 1984, there were about 19,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in Britain. The vast majority were from Vietnam.

Following the announcement of the main 10,000 quota, the Joint Committee for Refugees from Vietnam (JCRV), consisting of representatives of the voluntary agencies and the Home Office, was set up to co-ordinate the resettlement programme, call forward refugees from Hong Kong and act as a forum for policy discussion. An Advisory Council on the Reception and Resettlement of Refugees from Vietnam was also established with a much wider membership.

The JCRV arranged for the separate voluntary agencies to run reception centres which would house and feed the refugees initially, and provide them with medical screening, basic English and an introduction to Britain. The centres varied greatly in size, the largest containing 730 refugees and the smallest 18. The whole cost of running the centres was met by the government, but the centres were run by staff recruited by the voluntary agencies.

The initial aim was that refugees should not remain in the centres for longer than 3–4 months. Thereafter it was hoped and expected that the needs of refugees would be met by ordinary statutory agencies and locally based voluntary agencies. Placement of refugees depended on offers of housing from local authorities and housing associations, and initially, when publicity about the refugees was at its height, many such offers were forthcoming. As time passed, the number of such offers fell substantially, and many refugees had to spend much longer in reception centres than was initially envisaged. It was aimed to establish small settlements of refugees of between 4 and 10 families within the area of each housing authority. 'Support groups' of volunteers were established locally by the voluntary agencies. The nature of such support groups and the tasks they perform vary widely, but they represented the first source of help and advice to the settled refugees. They helped them to find school places for their children, to obtain welfare benefits and to register with general practitioners. However over a period of years enthusiasm in some of the support groups has waned, and some have broken up. The experience of refugees from Vietnam in Britain is discussed at other points in this report, and is assessed extensively in Jones (1982).

More recently, the nature of the Vietnamese resettlement programme has changed. Under a new three-year programme of support announced by the Home Secretary in April 1984, the voluntary agencies will encourage local responses to refugee needs, rather than themselves providing services to those refugees directly. Three officers with national functions and fourteen regional workers have been deployed to liaise with a wide variety of bodies, fostering

employment initiatives and language training, developing interpreting services and helping statutory services to be more responsive to the needs of refugees and encouraging self-help in the Vietnamese community. Home Office funding is being channelled through BRC, which is responsible for co-ordination and for contracting out work to the Ockenden Venture and Refugee Action.

Identifying Objectives for Resettlement Policy

Resettlement may reasonably be distinguished from the reception phase which precedes it. The immediate objectives of reception here barely need discussion. Refugees arriving in this country need to be housed, fed and clothed, and unless they have relatives or friends already here and ready to help, (or sufficient money) these tasks must be performed by government and the voluntary agencies. In the medium and long term the needs of refugees are more varied.

Resettlement in its broadest sense involves refugees obtaining the status of other members of the community. The central goal will be for refugees to obtain jobs, housing, education and other services of a standard as high as those obtained by other members of the community. In seeking to achieve this goal, a whole range of social policies will necessarily be involved. A narrower conception of resettlement policy places policies, practices and institutions specifically aimed at refugee groups within this context. From this point of view, the policy objective will be to support the broader process of resettlement, recognising that the primary agencies affecting this process are guided by social policies other than those directly concerned with refugees. The provision of that support — as refugee policy — must be distinguished from policies whose goal is to meet the needs shared by refugees, disadvantaged social groups and people in general.

In this context, it is necessary to ensure an effective relationship between refugee policy on the one hand, and policy concerned with immigrants and ethnic minorities on the other. Most refugee groups from the third world, disadvantaged by poor English, lack of education and relevant job skills, by the trauma of the refugee experience itself, and sometimes by racial discrimination, will not achieve equality at least in the first generation. Immigrants from the New Commonwealth in Britain who are subject to many of these difficulties (apart from the refugee trauma itself) have not achieved such equality despite many years of residence here. These longer term problems which many refugee groups share with other ethnic minorities, are not strictly ones of resettlement. It is now generally acknowledged that racial disadvantage bears only a limited relation to the recency of arrival of New Commonwealth immigrants; its very persistence suggests otherwise. In Britain a range of policies has been developed to combat racial disadvantage and to meet the needs of ethnic minority groups. For these reasons many of the long



term interests of ethnic minority refugees may best be answered under the heading of race relations policy. A corollary is that there is a need to ensure that the institutions of race relations policy are adapted to this role. Difficulties can occur here. For example in Britain a significant proportion of English language tuition is partly funded by central government under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966. However this legislation refers only to Commonwealth immigrants, so that while some Vietnamese refugees benefit from section 11 funded ESL provision they can only do so when the presence in the classroom of substantial numbers of Asians from the New Commonwealth provides the formal justification for that funding.

Refugee resettlement can therefore be identified as a task that goes beyond the immediate necessities of reception, but, in the case of refugees from ethnic minority groups, stops short of a long term attempt to combat racial disadvantage. However the goals — and limits — of resettlement need in large part to be determined by a consideration of the capacities of those institutions which concern themselves with refugees and their needs — in Britain the refugee agencies. The question of the proper objectives of resettlement policy translates into one over the proper role of refugee agencies.

The voluntary agencies

In Britain, voluntary agencies play a central role in the provision of services to refugees. Such services might be provided by central and local government and in Sweden, unusually among Western countries, most are so provided. The arguments in favour of using voluntary agencies to resettle in Britain are therefore worth cataloguing.

Firstly, the voluntary agencies in Britain have a long history of involvement with refugees, and they are familiar with their problems. It can be argued that their continuous involvement with 'trickle' refugees means that the collective experience of a voluntary agency, and the individual experience of many employees provide a basic resource when faced with an international emergency and a sudden influx of refugees. This is particularly important when there is no specialist unit attached to central government with responsibility for refugees, and expertise in refugee resettlement. In the United States such a unit exists in the Office of Refugee Resettlement. In Britain the career structure of the civil service entails that the handful of officials who deal with refugee matters in central government will not have had a lengthy experience of the problems of refugee resettlement, and in most local authorities there will be even less experience. In this case great reliance must be placed on the advice and experience of the staff of the voluntary agencies. The need for such reliance can in some circumstances become a problem, given that central government usually has to decide how to fund voluntary agencies dealing with refugees, while simultaneously leaning on their expertise.

Secondly, voluntary agencies dealing with refugees have a subsidiary role as pressure groups, identifying the needs of refugee groups for central government, local government, and the community at large, questioning resettlement policies where they are seen as inappropriate, and ensuring that services for refugees are not forgotten in debate over the allocation of resources. In the United States, Stein (1980) pointed out that 'virtually all' of the recent changes in the resettlement system, including the 1980 Refugee Act, stem from the initiatives of the voluntary agencies. Although it is to be hoped and expected that refugees themselves will play a part in this debate — possibly through their involvement in these same voluntary agencies, it is unrealistic to imagine that they will often be able to do so soon after their arrival in this country.

Thirdly, it is argued that if voluntary agencies provide a service to refugees it will usually be cheaper to government than would be the case if the service is provided directly, even though most voluntary agencies receive government funding. This is so (it is argued) partly because voluntary agencies use unpaid volunteers extensively, partly because paid staff may receive relatively low salaries, (Levin, 1981; North *et al* 1982), and partly because they attract private donations. However the first two points carry limited weight since some forms of statutory service provision, like health care, also use volunteers extensively, and because there is no particular reason why salaries in the voluntary sector should be lower than in statutory agencies. North *et al* report that American voluntary agencies vary considerably in their capacity to attract donations — from the 'substantial' to the minuscule. In Britain there are also considerable variations between the different voluntary agencies in fund-raising capacities.

Fourthly, voluntary agencies involve individuals in local communities as volunteers in the resettlement of refugees. It has been widely argued that volunteers, by acting as advocates for the refugees in the community, will generate sympathy for the plight of the refugees, and support for the aims of the refugee programme. Members of the local community will be seen as voluntarily assisting, and perhaps initiating, the resettlement of refugees in the area and this will help to defuse any potential resentment. Statutory agencies can involve local people and volunteers in service provision, for example in community work and police 'neighbourhood watch' schemes, but they tend to do so less than voluntary agencies.

The latter pair of considerations apply to many kinds of services which could be delivered either by the voluntary or the statutory sector, and are therefore less telling. The main argument for the British government to direct its resettlement efforts through the refugee agencies is that their experience is both an aid to administration and a stimulus to public debate and concern.

Given the advantages offered by voluntary agencies the aim in government resettlement policy must be to make the most effective use of those agencies

consistent with their limitations in size and specialist resources. However voluntary agencies dealing with refugee resettlement have also been subject to serious criticisms. It has been argued that there is an undesirable variation in the services provided by voluntary agencies to refugees, that the agencies have failed to co-ordinate their activities either with one another or with other agencies, and that staff and volunteers are sometimes rather amateur in their approach to resettling refugees. These criticisms deserve examination.

The first problem mentioned was that of variation in service provision. Different agencies involved in resettlement often have rather different policies, and these are reflected in different services provided to refugees settled under their aegis. At local level, groups of volunteers supporting the resettlement of refugees exercise a large measure of discretion over the form and extent of assistance provided. Stein (1980) argues that if there is a wide variation in the benefits and services available, refugees will respond by trying to manipulate the resettlement system to place themselves in the most advantageous position in respect of those benefits and services:

If we cannot achieve consensus on how to resettle refugees, then the refugees will design their own system. One of the goals of a planned system is to give a clear message to the refugees regarding expectations and behaviors, and to develop refugee community expectations and attitudes regarding resettlement that will provide peer pressure on newcomers to follow the correct path. Particularly when refugees are unacculturated and confused by the choices offered we must reduce the flexibility of the program.

This problem is probably more serious in the United States and Canada than in Britain, since the voluntary agencies there provide much more financial and material help directly to the refugees than is the case in Britain. However Stein's point about the expectations of refugees remains fundamental. The 'giving relationship' between volunteer support groups and refugees is bound to involve anxiety for both parties. On the part of the volunteers there can be anxiety that they are being exploited by the refugees, by the government which may be seen as using the volunteers as unpaid labour, and even by other members of the support group who are 'not doing their share'. These anxieties have been reported among volunteer 'sponsors' in Canada (who play a comparable role to that of members of support groups in Britain), (Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission, 1980). On the part of the refugees there will be anxiety about how they can repay or show gratitude for the services provided for them, and about what they can reasonably ask of the volunteer support group. Refugees from the third world will usually be unfamiliar with volunteering as an activity and this may add to their confusion. A sense of powerlessness and dependency will pervade all their dealings with volunteer support groups. Some of this anxiety is probably inevitable, but the anxieties of both parties can be much reduced if guidelines are available which indicate what can reasonably be expected of the refugee

support groups. Such guidelines might also indicate minimum standards. When volunteers take responsibility for resettling a group of refugees in one locality, there will always be certain services, particularly during the initial phase of resettlement, which may be regarded as vital. These would usually include the provision of basic advice about how to claim welfare benefits, register with a doctor and obtain other basic services.

Within a voluntary agency, central control will usually involve giving information and advice about best practice, perhaps providing facilities so that local groups can share experience and discuss problems, and prohibiting actions which are regarded as positively harmful. This should allow centrally and locally acquired expertise to be disseminated. As a result, it may be expected that variation in the nature of services provided will reduce — as the result of reasoned argument, rather than through the imposition of a rule which is, or may be seen to be, arbitrary. By the same means minimum standards of service provision can be ensured and any abuses checked.

The need to co-ordinate resettlement work carried out by a variety of organisations also raises wider issues for refugee agencies. Jones (1982) described rivalry and a lack of co-operation among the three voluntary agencies operating in Britain. This was particularly damaging when attempts were made to transfer family members from one voluntary agency to another to reunite families. In the United States, Stein (1980) argues that the voluntary agencies fail to co-ordinate their activities internally, with one another, and with statutory agencies. North *et al* (1982) point out that “there appears to be no significant pressure on the localities, from either the national voluntary agencies or from the State Department to move toward meaningful co-operation, nor rewards for accomplishing it”. They recommend ‘federal leadership’ to improve relationships between the voluntary agencies and state and local governments.

The management style necessary for volunteer agencies need not differ greatly from that used in other organisations; hierarchical central control need not be a distinguishing feature of the latter. Large bureaucratic organisations are often ‘managed’ as much by a steady flow of information and advice in all directions — up and down the hierarchy and horizontally — as by direct ‘orders’ from the top down. It might be argued that volunteers expect a degree of control over their own work as a mark of recognition of their volunteer status, and that they will not accept instructions with which they disagree. Against this, volunteers who are new to the refugee field will usually welcome all the advice they can obtain about the task of helping refugees to resettle. Precisely because volunteers will often be inexperienced, they will hesitate to pit their own judgment against the advice they receive. The implication of this is that the failures of control and co-ordination — for which voluntary agencies dealing with refugees have often been criticised — are not inevitable drawbacks of voluntary agencies, such that the only possible remedy would be

replacement by statutory services. Instead they suggest contingent management weaknesses which can be rectified.

The third problem mentioned above was that of lack of professionalism. This is hardly unique to voluntary bodies, but volunteers will usually not have formal qualifications and will often be inexperienced. If salaried employees receive low rates of pay — as occurs in some voluntary agencies — in many cases they too will be quasi-volunteers. North *et al* (1982) characterise their position as involving more 'zeal than professionalism'. They also found high rates of staff turnover among the junior, but not the senior staff. However there are only some types of resettlement work where professional expertise is required. It will not be relevant to many of the tasks performed by support groups, such as providing a refugee family with clothing, or helping them to fill in forms, or simply making them feel welcome. In other areas a modest amount of knowledge will be helpful — in identifying appropriate employment, or in guiding a refugee through the complexities of the welfare benefit system.

Failure to liaise with outside agencies has already been mentioned as a criticism of the voluntary agencies. This may be in part because of a lack of knowledge of other agencies, their mode of operation and the services they can provide for refugees. In Britain the local authority will obviously play a prominent role, particularly over the longer term, in providing services to refugees. However it requires some specialised knowledge on the part of a support group worker to know what services are provided by — say — a Social Services Department and to know how to assist refugees to obtain those services. The implication is that workers helping to resettle refugees do not themselves need to know enough to liaise effectively with the specialised agencies and to refer refugees to them. In most cases it should be possible to impart such knowledge through written material or short training courses provided centrally by the voluntary agencies.

The theme which has run through this discussion has been the central management of voluntary agencies. Voluntary agencies helping to resettle refugees have been criticised for variability in service provision, failure in co-ordination and lack of professionalism. In the United States the 1980 Refugee Act recognised and underlined the need to co-ordinate refugee programmes and services. There is good reason to suppose that all of these problems might be effectively answered by tighter central management particularly in respect of the support, advice and control provided by nationally or regionally based voluntary agencies to local support groups.

The use of refugees as resettlement workers

There are some clear advantages in the use of resettlement workers who are of the same ethnic group as the refugees who are being assisted. In many cases

such staff will be bilingual in the language of the refugees and that of the country of resettlement, and this represents a crucial skill. Moreover such staff will often be 'bicultural' and well placed to explain the customs and institutions of the country of resettlement to the refugees. They can also represent role models, convincing refugees that people like them can survive and prosper in the new country. If the staff have themselves been refugees, this may grant them an added sympathy for, and understanding of, the plight of the new arrivals. In Britain, Bang and Finlay (1982) have described a scheme to train refugees from Vietnam as para-social workers to help with the resettlement of other refugees from Vietnam. They describe the rationale for the scheme as follows:

... the problems the Vietnamese are going to face in settlement that are beyond the scope of support groups usually involve skills associated with social work; if social workers are appointed they will need interpreters; their ability will be limited by that of the interpreters working with them; the interpreters will therefore need training; if training is to be given, might it not be better to train Vietnamese in social work rather than interpreting skills?

The criteria for recruiting trainees under the scheme included 'reasonable English' and that the trainees 'be refugees acceptable to refugees'. However a very practical emphasis on the value of persons with interpreting skills is very different from claiming that refugees, simply because they are refugees, have a vital role to play in a resettlement programme. A global sympathy for refugees is a far more abstract and less common moral concern than sympathy for fellow members of the same ethnic group, and although it is to be hoped that such a broad concern for refugees will be found among refugee and non-refugee staff in the voluntary agencies, it is unrealistic to imagine that such sympathy and understanding will always follow simply from an individual having been a refugee. North and his collaborators argue that poorly paid jobs in the voluntary agencies may be attractive to refugees because they provide prestige and a kind of political power in the refugee community. This is not in itself illegitimate, but it is suggested that abuse is possible when the caseworker staff have 'a great deal of small scale power over individual refugees'. Whether or not such abuse is more likely when the caseworker and the refugee are from the same community is a moot point. However Shackman (1982) reports that a community worker in Bristol felt that the Vietnamese interpreter who helped her in her work with the Vietnamese community was 'too closely involved in the community'. This and other drawbacks might be partially overcome, she felt, by better training and support.

For these reasons, attempts to match the ethnicity of voluntary agency staff to that of a refugee group need sensitivity and discretion, bearing in mind the various social distinctions within the refugee group. Grant (1979) describes how Vietnamese refugees in France have remained strongly conscious of ethnic and class differences within their own community. In this connection North

et al point out that the enmities acquired by ethnic groups who have been at war with each other for centuries in Indochina are not easily forgotten in America. Bang and Finlay recognised this problem. Two thirds of their mostly middle-class trainees came from Saigon, whereas 80 per cent of the mainly working class refugees came from North Vietnam and were predominantly of Chinese ethnic origin. Prejudice between such widely different groups was acknowledged. However two of the trainees from South Vietnam later said that the training scheme had helped them to overcome their considerable prejudice towards Northerners. This particular training scheme cannot be evaluated here but it should be noted that there are at least two grounds for caution. First, in other contexts, training schemes designed to eliminate deep-seated racial or ethnic prejudice have been only partly successful at best, and at worst counterproductive. Second, the effectiveness of workers helping refugees will usually depend not only on their impartiality, but also on their being seen as impartial by all elements in the refugee community.

‘Compassion fatigue’

‘Compassion fatigue’ is a term used for a widely described phenomenon — the tendency for volunteer help for refugees to drift away after an initial bout of enthusiasm. In Britain the JCRV report “after some 3 years, and in some cases longer, support groups’ enthusiasm for hard work and recurring problems can wane and there are some areas where groups have broken up and the refugee agencies have had to judge whether or not it is possible to develop fresh sources of support” (JCRV, 1983). An influx of refugees is often accompanied by a burst of favourable publicity in the media regarding the plight of the refugees, as was observed with the Vietnamese boat people. However “... interest in the problem fades as the refugee drama moves from the first to the last page of the newspapers”. (UNHCR, 1980). Moreover the long hard struggle of resettlement rarely competes in terms of drama and excitement with the story of flight, particularly in the case of the ‘boat people’. The initial prominence of refugee issues is very helpful in recruiting volunteer help for reception and resettlement, but there is a risk that the same volunteers will lose interest as national media interest fades. A 1980 UNHCR workshop discussed the role of the media in ensuring “that volunteers and members of local communities working with refugees remain constantly stimulated and motivated”. It was argued that it would greatly help matters if the media avoided an initial ‘saturation’ of public opinion with stories about refugees, while continuing to provide information about refugees over a reasonably lengthy period. However although there undoubtedly is a role for government and the refugee agencies in feeding information and stories to the media to retain a favourable climate of public opinion towards refugees, they will be unlikely to overturn traditional news in the media.

Many writers have commented on the changing response of the host community to refugees. Beach and Ragvald (1982) argue that in Sweden, so long as the

hosts can play the role of good Samaritan, relations are positive, but with time, and confrontation with the long term problems inevitably suffered by refugees, friendliness tends to give way to irritation and prejudice. Breakspear (1980) suggests that the refugee support movement in Canada may be short-lived, while resentment is likely to be more long lasting.

The general implication is that resettlement policies need to take into account this tendency for support to ebb away, making maximum use of the initial enthusiasm without creating problems in the medium term by leaving refugees unsupported at a time when they are still in need of much help.

Conclusion: resettlement and the role of voluntary agencies

Resettlement, as a task which goes beyond reception but stops short of general welfare provision or of policies related to ethnic minorities, defines a role for the voluntary agencies dealing with refugees. Resettlement need not involve cultural assimilation — a goal no longer accepted for other migrants — but it will require refugees to acquire sufficient understanding of the culture and social institutions of the receiving country to make their way in society; on the part of individuals providing services and otherwise dealing with refugees it will require some understanding of the circumstances of the refugees. A series of considerations advanced in this chapter support the view that this role should be one of bridge-building, of guiding those agencies so that they can effectively meet refugee needs. A weakness of some voluntary agencies may be a lack of professional skills in employees, and volunteers will be at an even greater disadvantage. Coping with any particular influx of refugees will involve an initial phase of reception and dealing with the immediate needs of resettled refugees and this may be a task which the voluntary agencies are best adapted to perform, in the absence of direct central government involvement. In the early stages of a reception and resettlement programme, it is relatively easy to recruit volunteer helpers, before 'compassion fatigue' sets in. However from a very early stage many of the basic needs of refugees (like schooling and medical care) will inevitably be met by institutions other than those specifically entrusted with refugee resettlement. Meeting those needs can raise problems. If, for example, a particular refugee group displays an intense suspicion of officialdom (because of experience previous to their flight), people who deal with that group, whether teachers, doctors, social workers, or volunteers in refugee support groups, will be better able to help the refugees if they are aware of the problem. Effective resettlement by the refugee agencies will therefore involve promoting an awareness of refugee needs and problems with a wide variety of agencies responsible for delivering specialised services.

3 The refugee experience

How is the process of resettlement experienced by refugees themselves? This issue is important to the overall success of resettlement partly because it relates to the motivation of refugees making their way in a new country, and partly because an understanding of the refugee experience is of great relevance to the work of all those who provide services for refugees. The literature is sparse in hard empirical information, often anecdotal and only sometimes perceptive. That said, there are a number of general points to be made about the factors which bear on the experience of refugees.

Refugees arriving in the country of resettlement often feel an initial sense of euphoria, simply because they have escaped what has often been considerable personal danger in the course of their flight or in the country from which they have fled. Anger, guilt, and depression have also been described, although profound relief appears more common (Baker, 1983). This initial feeling, relating as it does to recent events, can hardly be long-lasting. It will soon be replaced by other feelings referring back to the old country and old way of life, or forward to the country of resettlement. Most refugees will feel a deep sense of loss in relation to the country they have left behind. It will be particularly strong in the case of those refugees who were forced to leave their country entirely against their will. They may have relatives left behind, and if those relatives are also subject to persecution, their grievance for the surrendering of kinship bonds will be compounded by an anxiety for the fate of their family, or uncertainty over whether they have escaped. Such uncertainty inevitably provokes anxiety. An American government report on Vietnamese refugees attributed over half of all reported cases of emotional problems to separation of families, while one quarter were attributed to 'culture shock'. (US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979.) More generally the refugee will have lost the social world and sets of assumptions and expectations which gave life meaning. The country of resettlement, however welcoming, will initially be lacking in emotional rewards. One former South Vietnamese soldier wrote: "Since my country was lost, I feel that I am no longer a person". Another Vietnamese boy wrote that he "lived as if living in a dream" having left everything behind which he loved. (Hawthorne, 1982.)

The sense of loss will often persist to the end of a refugee's life although it may be mitigated by achievement and acceptance in the country of resettlement, and a sense that it has become 'home'. Other refugees, like many migrants, will retain a hope or expectation that they will return to their country of origin

at some time. For refugees this aspiration will usually hinge on a change in the nature of the political regime in that country. In the absence of such a change refugees know that however great their failure in resettlement, they cannot return. For the migrant the myth of return may represent a sentimental nostalgia, while for refugees it can be a frustrated longing for the country they never wished to leave.

The age of a refugee will critically affect the experience of resettlement. Among ordinary migrants, young adults predominate, but it is typical of refugee groups that they include whole families, involving all age groups. Generally speaking the younger people find the experience of resettlement easier, being more adaptable and readier to learn new ways as well as having fewer memories of what has been lost. Older refugees find it much more difficult to adapt to a new labour market than the young. School children have the opportunity to learn about the language and institutions of the receiving country virtually full-time. Within families, problems can arise. In Britain a social worker described how the older refugees become "more Vietnamese than ever they were in Vietnam" while the young become the interpreters of English life for their families: this can weaken parental authority and self-esteem (*The Times*, 1983.)

The members of any particular refugee group will have diverse experiences in the country of resettlement. What they share is a common memory of the way of life in their country of origin. The value they attach to their roots will therefore be reflected in the strength and shape of the refugee community, within which traditional customs are retained. Expressed crudely, there are two lines of argument here. One is that the strength of the minority culture, and the community which supports it, tends to impede acceptance, integration and economic advance. The other is that the ethnic minority community is an essential resource for its members, providing practical and emotional support to them in their attempt to make their way in the wider society. Refugees tend to experience a more sudden loss of a traditional life than do other migrants. For the migrant, the phenomena of chain migration and return migration create many points of contact between the country of origin and that of settlement, as well as reinforcing community ties within the country of settlement. An immigrant community, often long settled in the country of reception, is a crucial source of advice and practical help to the new immigrant. In some cases historical and geographical connections between sending countries and the countries of immigration allow prospective immigrants a degree of familiarity with the receiving country and its institutions before they make the final decision to migrate. Ordinary migration occurs as a result of choice, in the expectation or hope of some end — often improved economic prospects. If an immigrant becomes disillusioned, the option is always open to return to the country of origin. In most or all of these respects refugees are worse off than migrants. This report will return to the issue.

The refugees' perceptions

One measure of successful resettlement is the judgement of the refugees themselves. Kunz (1971) studied the time taken by refugees in Australia before they chose to become naturalised Australians. His results show that refugees with better education, and who had retrieved their initial occupational status tended to naturalise much quicker. Refugees tended to break into two readily distinguishable classes: those who naturalise quickly (within five or ten years after arrival) and the slow naturalisers who may take up to twenty-five years. Another study carried out in Australia found that English ability was strongly related to early naturalisation. Refugees who speak English well also tended to be younger on arrival in Australia, achieve higher social status, and identify with Australia. The relatively young and well-educated Hungarian Jews who left Hungary in 1956 perceived their resettlement as occupying a relatively short space of time. In a 1966 study by Soskis (1967), they were asked how long it took them to 'feel at home in the United States'. Over 80% said within three years, and about half of those said within one year. Similar results have been reported for Cuban refugees in the United States. The vast majority 'felt settled' in the United States between one and five years after arrival, with about one third mentioning a time between two and three years (Wenk, 1968). These results are suggestive, but they refer to extremely vague judgements and need to be interpreted with care.

Volunteers and resettlement workers

In Britain, as in many other countries, many of the refugee's first contacts will be with volunteers and employees of voluntary agencies. Edholme *et al* (1982) describe the baffled response of refugees from Vietnam in Britain. The refugees had no way of knowing what status a 'volunteer' had since no such type existed in the communities from which they came. As a result, they had unrealistic expectations about what the volunteers could do, and consequent disappointment. If anxiety is to be minimised, refugees will need to have some understanding of the volunteers and voluntary agencies who will assist their resettlement in the same way as those who offer help need to understand the refugee culture. Refugees, almost by definition, will often have been treated extremely badly by government and bureaucratic organisations in the past. This may be reflected in a suspicious attitude toward resettlement authorities. Stein (1980) describes how this can have serious and cumulative effects:

A vicious spiral can set in: refugees are helped because they are helpless; they must display their need and helplessness; the caseworker cannot accede to all who are needy, must shield himself from emotional involvement; the cool attitude of the caseworker conveys suspicion to the refugee about his truthfulness; if they won't believe the truth the refugee inflates it; hearing exaggerated stories the caseworker becomes suspicious.

Mamdani (1973) writes in almost identical terms of the experience of Ugandan Asians in Britain. Dirks (1977) has emphasised the tendency of refugees to be

extremely distrustful of authority, and Murphy (1955) describes his conversations with displaced persons in post-war Australia in a similar vein:

Not only had they been betrayed too often in the past by death or separation, but their emotional needs were much greater. Their behaviour thus represented in part a fear of emotional ties and in part an excessive demand on such ties. Some of the behaviour described to me could clearly be understood as a 'testing out', in the same way as a juvenile neurotic tests out its therapist or foster parents.

Changes in attitude over time

Stein (1980) argues that refugees go through a series of stages. During the first few months it comes home to refugees how much they have lost, but over the first and second years refugees 'display an impressive drive to recover what has been lost, to rebuild their lives. They will work hard, try to learn the language and search for better jobs. The same period may see a move to another part of the country where refugees are concentrated, and an increase in family problems. Third, after four or five years, disillusion often sets in, although progress has been made, aspirations have not been realised'. Levin echoes the last point. She argues that refugees coming to Britain from the developing world have unrealistically high expectations of life in the developed world. As a result they become disillusioned and lose the desire or ability to better themselves. Moore (1982) on the basis of a survey of Vietnamese refugees in Britain, reports that the refugees appeared initially to have high expectations of obtaining good jobs. "Unfortunately for the majority, the economic situation prevented them from getting a job". Li (1982), describing Ethiopian refugees in the United States, argues that refugees sometimes have unrealistic expectations, and that these are the cause of many adjustment problems. Portes *et al* (1977) for example, report that Cuban refugees on arrival in the United States expect to reach an occupational level equivalent to that which they had in Cuba.

Stein's view of a sequence of stages is plausible, and his point about disillusionment is backed up by other commentators. However the timetable rests to a great extent on his view that there is little prospect of much social mobility after four years, and as will be seen in Chapter 4 the evidence is very weak on this point. Moreover disillusionment may be common, but is far from universal, even after a number of years. Simon (1983) found that Soviet Jewish refugees who had been in the United States for between six and ten years were optimistic about their future rather than disillusioned; (the same study reports that both Vietnamese and Soviet Jewish refugee parents are very ambitious for their children). Rogg (1971) found that Cuban refugees in New York had relatively high levels of job satisfaction despite a loss of occupational status since leaving Cuba, and Wenk (1968) in another study of Cuban refugees reports that most felt their expectations of life in the U.S. to have been at least partially fulfilled.

Although it is possible to point to attitudes commonly found among refugees — such as disillusionment — the evidence is quite inadequate to support any 'typical' history of refugee attitudes during resettlement, and it is very open to question whether one exists. Different refugee groups, with experience of different historical circumstances leading them to arrive in the country of resettlement will have different initial expectations and therefore capacity for disillusionment. Opportunities for advancement will depend on widely varying labour market conditions and the relevant skills of refugee groups. The variation in opportunities and in consequent social mobility will inevitably be reflected in wide variation in the attitudes of refugee groups, since there inevitably is a two-way causal relationship between attitudes and motivation on the one hand, and success or failure in the job market on the other.

4 Obtaining employment

During much of the post-war period, refugee groups in Britain have had little difficulty in obtaining employment. Nearly all the refugees from wartime Poland had obtained employment by 1950 and by the end of December 1957, less than 5% of the 15,000 Hungarian refugees who had arrived during the previous year were unemployed (Levin, 1981). However unemployment rates are now higher than they have been for many years, and some of the more recent groups of refugees have been less well-equipped to obtain jobs. For this reason resettlement policy needs to give much closer attention to employment issues than was necessary in the past.

For many adult refugees, obtaining a job will be central to the experience of resettlement. For a refugee, who has been powerlessly dependent on the benevolence of the receiving country, the psychological value of obtaining a job will be greater even than for an unemployed indigenous worker. Quite apart from its value as work experience, shared by all workers, which may lead to other and better jobs, a job will often provide a context where the refugee can improve language skills and come to terms with the social environment of the receiving country.

Refugees and immigrants

Refugees share with other immigrants many difficulties in entering the labour market. Both groups can be hampered by language difficulties, lack of the qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the labour market in the receiving country, and discrimination on ethnic or racial grounds. However in the absence of special measures to help them, refugees will usually be worse placed than other immigrants. New immigrants, like the New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain, will often have friends and relatives in the receiving country who will assist the search for a job, and unlike the refugee, the ordinary migrant will be psychologically prepared for this search, being reasonably well-informed about the costs, risks and opportunities involved. Voluntary migration may be timed to match a demand for labour in the receiving country, and, conversely, receiving countries very often adapt their own immigration policies to the form and extent of the demand for labour within those countries. Refugees, virtually by definition, are not migrating as a result of labour demand in the receiving countries, and the decision to accept refugees for resettlement is primarily taken on humanitarian grounds rather than on the basis of labour market demand. The upshot is that refugees

sometimes arrive in receiving countries at a time when there are very few suitable jobs for them. This appears to be the case with the Vietnamese refugees who came to Britain in 1979 and the years following; Jones (1982) reports that in 1981 only 16% of the Vietnamese refugees in Britain who were eligible for work had jobs.

First jobs

Downward occupational mobility tends to be greater for refugees than it is for other migrants. Weiermair (1971) found that Hungarian refugees arriving in Canada after the events of 1956 experienced a much greater loss of occupational status than other post-war migrants. The Canadian Immigration and Population Study (1974) provides similar evidence. Chiswick (1979) analysing the experience of a range of immigrant and refugee groups in the United States, found that initially refugees tend to be at a disadvantage relative to immigrants. Chiswick argues that this is because immigrants, unlike refugees, are self selected for motivation and ability.

Jobs vary enormously in the extent to which the related skills can be readily applied in a new country. At the lower end of the occupational spectrum many of the manual jobs performed in third world countries will not exist — at least in any number — in the industrialised world. However, many of the less skilled manual jobs can be learned rapidly — in a few weeks or months. Most white collar professional and managerial jobs depend heavily on linguistic ability, so that even where an employment skill is itself transferable, it will depend on acquired fluency in the language of the country of resettlement, which will usually take a few years. Some higher occupational skills, particularly those which are scientifically based such as medicine or engineering, will be readily transferable once the language of the receiving country is learned, although problems may arise in obtaining recognition for professional qualifications obtained in the country of origin. Business skills may be transferable, as experience with the Uganda Asians shows, although refugees who have lost most of their capital face real obstacles in re-establishing themselves. Others in the higher occupational strata, like lawyers and civil servants, whose jobs relate closely to the idiosyncrasies of the social institutions in particular countries, will find that many of their skills are irrelevant in the new country.

Older refugees often experience greater difficulty in transferring job skills. Rogg (1974) reports that older Cuban refugees experienced more downward mobility relative to their position in Cuba than younger refugees. Rogg also developed an index of 'occupational adjustment' designed to indicate whether the refugees were using skills and knowledge developed in Cuba in their work in the United States, and whether they were content with their work. She found that of those heads of household under 40, less than 20 per cent were, on this index, 'poorly' adjusted occupationally, whereas of those over 40

approaching half were in this state. A sharp change in occupational adjustment was noted at around 40; twice as many heads of household aged between 40 and 50 were poorly adjusted than was the case for those between 30 and 40.

Initially, refugees who worked in higher status jobs in the country of origin tend to experience most downward occupational mobility on resettlement. Davie (1947), in a study of refugees from Nazism, found that although nearly half his sample had been businessmen in Europe, only just over one quarter were in the same position in America in 1945; the proportion in manual work had meanwhile increased from 4% of the sample to one quarter. Weiermair reports that in his sample of Hungarian refugees in Canada, the proportion in semi-skilled and unskilled work increased from about 15% in Hungary to 35% in Canada in respect of the first jobs obtained by refugees. Rogg (1974), in a study of Cuban refugees in West New York, found that of the refugees who had middle and high level jobs in Cuba (in fact the vast majority of the refugee group) about three quarters experienced a reduction in occupational status. However of the small proportion who had low level jobs in Cuba, a significant number improved their position. Stein (1979) describes the position of refugees who came from Vietnam to the United States in 1975, a large proportion of whom came from the upper socio-economic strata. After three months three quarters of the heads of households among the refugees had experienced a reduction in occupational status relative to their positions in Vietnam. Probably the main reason why refugees in the higher occupational strata experience most initial downward mobility is simply because they have furthest to fall. Other reasons are the language-dependence of most high-level jobs, the irrelevance of certain high level skills in the country of resettlement, problems in obtaining recognition for qualifications, and the time taken to organise and finance small business activity.

Expectations and job satisfaction

Refugees may be willing to accept extremely menial jobs on resettlement, even when they are relatively well qualified. Weiermair points out that although Hungarian refugees in Canada experienced a greater loss of occupational status than other post-war immigrants, they also experienced much shorter average lengths of unemployment. Expectations play a critical role here. A large proportion of immigrants have chosen to migrate in the hope of improving their economic position, whereas refugees are involuntary migrants who are well aware that they have been accepted for settlement on humanitarian grounds; to find a good job as well may be too much to hope for. On the other hand, immigrants who have crossed international boundaries in the hope of making good are likely to be strongly motivated to search for jobs in general and remunerative jobs in particular. They may be prepared to accept poor quality jobs which allow opportunity for shiftwork and overtime to boost their earnings. This has certainly been the case for New Commonwealth immigrants in Britain.

In this context, the distinction between earnings and occupational status needs to be underlined. Many refugees and immigrants from third world countries who settle in industrialised countries will have higher incomes than they did in their countries of origin, even if they are unemployed or have exchanged a white collar job in their country of origin for manual work in the country in which they settle. This raises the question of how satisfied they will be with this position.

The crucial point determining job satisfaction will be the choice of a reference group. A refugee may compare his or her occupational status with the status of other members of the refugee community, or with the refugee's occupational status previous to migration, or with the occupational status of the indigenous population in the receiving country. The refugee is likely to place less emphasis on the second mentioned reference group than a similarly placed immigrant, since the refugee is rarely in a position to consider a return to the country of origin, or to regret an original decision to leave. For this reason initial downward occupational mobility on resettlement may be more easily accepted by refugees than by immigrants. The first generation of New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain express only marginally less satisfaction with their jobs than their white counterparts (Smith, 1976). However, the second generation, who compare themselves with their white counterparts, are not so happy with the poor jobs in which they often find themselves.

Changes over time

The longer term prospects of refugees are more variable. Weiermair (1971) showed that in his sample of Hungarian refugees much of the loss in occupational status which occurred on migration was made up after four years. After this time, the proportion in non-manual work had returned to its original level, although after twelve years very little further advance in occupational status had occurred. Stein (1980) cites Weiermair's findings and suggests that refugees are unlikely to advance their occupational status significantly after four years, although he acknowledges that the evidence is scanty. This is probably an inappropriate generalisation from Weiermair's results. The Hungarian refugees were a relatively well-educated white group who arrived in Canada during a time of rapid economic growth and opportunity in employment: for this reason they regained their initial occupational status after only four years. It would be unrealistic to expect them to advance much further given the kind of work they performed in Hungary. Implicitly at least, Stein supports his view with a psychological theory, that a refugee's impetus will begin to dry up after about four years and disillusionment will set in. However, as described earlier, the evidence on this point is also unconvincing.

The hard evidence, which is sparse, suggests that different refugee groups have quite a wide variety of experience in the labour market. Chiswick (1979)

reports that Cuban refugees in the United States gradually increased their earnings over ten or fifteen years until they approach parity with native-born whites. Generally, labour market experience in the United States has a larger effect on earnings for immigrants and refugees from countries where social conditions are very different. Of the group of refugees who arrived in the United States in 1975, only 15% were employed as labourers and blue collar workers in Vietnam. In the United States the proportion in this lowest occupational stratum has gradually decreased from about half to about one third of the refugees after 27 months in the United States. Male unemployment has fallen from 32% to 5%, and the group may eventually regain their initial occupational status. Most refugee groups studied have eventually made their way back to their initial occupational status (Stein, 1979). However one must qualify this by noting that few refugee groups from the third world have been the object of such study, and of those that have, the Cubans are making slow progress in returning to their initial occupational position.

Front end loading, training, and employment

One issue which has been prominent in the literature on refugee resettlement has been that of 'front end loading' (see for example Stein, 1980; Taft *et al*, 1979). Front-end loading means providing a great deal of help to refugees at an early stage in their resettlement, in the expectation that they will then require less support (particularly income support) at a later date.

If the goal of policy is to resettle refugees at minimum cost to the receiving community then such programmes must be evaluated in terms of their capacity to provide refugees with employment such that the refugees are not a long term burden on the state. If the aim is to provide a satisfactory life for refugees according to some chosen notion of what such a life involves then different considerations apply. The long term cost of resettling a refugee will not be the sole guide to the effectiveness of a particular policy; the value of language and vocational training will be assessed in terms of their capacity to provide employment satisfactory to the refugee, and the language component will also be assessed as a means of enhancing social skills and improving the quality of life of the refugee.

It might be argued that refugees take jobs which would otherwise have gone to the indigenous workforce, and that this should be taken into account in assessing the cost-effectiveness of any training programme for refugees. Two considerations can be urged against this perspective. First, it is economically naive to assume that jobs for immigrants necessarily implies fewer jobs for the rest of the population. Jobs are not a finite natural resource like coal or oil. They are created by people as well as taken by them. While immigrants may occupy jobs which would otherwise be taken by indigenous workers, their employment increases both the tax base and the demand for goods and services, and this will in turn tend to create jobs in other parts of the economy.

Immigrant businesses may create jobs more directly. The net effect of immigration on employment will therefore vary according to the circumstances. Secondly, refugees from third world countries may sometimes take jobs which are not wanted by the indigenous workforce. There is good evidence that immigrant labour often fulfils this role in Western countries (see for example Unit for Manpower Studies, 1977) and Adelman (1980) has argued that this applies to refugees in Canada. The one limiting factor here would be a consideration of fairness, that it would be wrong to provide a refugee group with a training programme, or indeed any benefit, which would give them an unfair advantage over similarly disadvantaged groups already within the receiving country — particularly other ethnic minority groups. There is much room for debate about how such a principle is to be interpreted and applied, but it would be a serious mistake to disregard it entirely as being excessively abstract. The tensions between (mainly white) Cuban refugees and blacks in Miami, which have on occasion led to rioting, are in part attributable to a perception (just or unjust) on the part of some sections of the black community that the principle was being flouted in respect of the Cuban refugees. On the face of it there are a priori grounds for endorsing front-end loading of some description. The cost of providing long term welfare support to refugee families is enormous, if household heads and other family members fail to obtain employment. Programmes of language and vocational training, and other types of employment initiative are therefore bound to be cost-effective for the receiving society, if they stand any reasonable chance of leading to jobs for the refugees.

Stein's argument — that the main opportunity for refugees to regain their original occupational status occurs within the first four years — implies that vocational and language training should take place within this period. This leads him to favour front-end loading in principle. On its specific value, he writes:

The evidence is either absent or unclear regarding this method's effectiveness, but it is generally favorable. It must be noted, however, that front-end loading generally has been designed for and is most effective in resettling traditional refugees, those with easily transferable professional, technical or craft skills. Some research on refugee behaviour suggests it will also work with "new" refugees. In 1975 intensive programs proved highly effective in resettling Indochinese physicians and dentists. A more limited view of front-end loading is needed when dealing with refugees with nontransferable or few skills.

Taft *et al* (1979) argue for front-end loading in rather different terms. They agree with Stein that front-end loading is not only cost-effective but also 'better for the morale of the refugee and the long term viability of his resettlement'. They describe a number of models of the resettlement process. First, front-end loading, which recognises that resettlement is a costly and difficult process, seeks to make substantial initial investments in human

capital to avoid sustained dependency. Second, 'short term dependency', which assumes that relatively minimal expenditures are needed to convert the refugee into a taxpaying member of our society. Third, sustained total or partial dependency, which is obviously undesirable. Taft and his collaborators point out that the second model works with some refugee groups; it worked with the Hungarians in the late fifties, when growth rates were high and jobs plentiful. However current United States policy was criticised for assuming that the second model would prevail again with refugees from Vietnam, whereas in fact the tendency with this group was to slip into the third model of sustained dependency, as the rather low labour force participation rates of the Vietnamese refugees indicated. The most costly outcome had resulted from an attempt to choose the cheapest option.

A fundamental point about the nature of policy formation is at issue here. Long term income support for unemployed and under-employed refugees is vastly expensive. However no policy initiative is required for these costs to be incurred, no separate budget need be set aside for these purposes, and no separate justification need be advanced for the spending involved. The costs will in any case be identified only with difficulty. By contrast, special programmes of language and vocational training for refugees will normally require separate policy initiatives, and the justification of a special budget against other spending priorities. Launching such programmes will involve overcoming obstacles of bureaucratic inertia, financial stringency and political opposition.

These obstacles would be damaging if they prevented the implementation of a well thought out programme likely to lead to jobs for refugees. The points which can be made about bureaucratic inertia are obvious and familiar. Financial stringency will be irrational if it involves saving small sums of money in the short term at the cost of much greater expenditure in the long term. Political opposition will often be irrational for similar reasons. There may be resentment against spending money on training and other employment measures for a group of refugees when there are many pressing needs among indigenous people, but if the effect of limitations on training for refugees is to increase the overall long term costs of resettling refugees, indigenous groups will be the losers in the long term.

However there may be external pressures which — equally irrationally — will assist front-end loading. During and following a refugee emergency international and domestic attention will focus on the plight of refugees, and at that time there will be most pressure on the government to 'do something' visibly for the refugees. The long term experience of resettling refugees is unlikely to be so newsworthy. Despite the obstacles which have been discussed, political pressures can favour a resettlement programme which is 'front-end loaded' in the sense of one in which effort is conspicuous (although not necessarily effective) in the short term.

The issue is one which Britain can ill afford to ignore when accepting refugees at a time when national unemployment rates are high. The World University Service (1977) report that in 1975, of those Chilean heads of household who had been in the United Kingdom for more than 6 months, as many were unemployed as employed, and refugees from Vietnam have high rates of unemployment. If a refugee group fails to effectively enter the labour market, the long term cost is huge. It can be argued that for some refugee groups, the gap in terms of linguistic, cultural and vocational skills between the country of origin and that of resettlement will be too great ever to be bridged, particularly for older refugees whose capacity for adaptation will be more limited. While the experience of Vietnamese refugees in Britain might seem to lend support to this counsel of despair, they were a profoundly disadvantaged group of refugees arriving at a time of very high unemployment. It is difficult to identify any other refugee group arriving in any other Western country which has fared as badly. For these reasons very serious consideration needs to be given to the kind of training and employment programmes necessary for refugee groups. Quite apart from humanitarian considerations, this may be the cheapest way to resettle them.

Given that front-end loading of some description is desirable, a more practical question arises — what kind of language and vocational training should be provided to refugees?

There is ample evidence that immigrants and refugees with skills in the language of the receiving country tend to get better jobs than those who are less fluent. In a survey of (mainly European) post-war refugees in the United States, Davie (1947) found that nearly half the sample mentioned language problems as their greatest difficulty in adjusting to American life. The JCRV (1982) argue that when jobs are plentiful, language difficulties do not prevent employment, but during recession, language disadvantage is particularly damaging. Beyond these unsurprising points, the evidence is often non-existent and unclear. Stein (1980) argues that the first phase of resettlement — from three to six months — should involve English teaching and vocational and general orientation, the aim being to get the refugee 'job-ready' as soon as possible. On the language component, Stein acknowledges that the evidence is scanty, but states that "the clear consensus of the ESL professionals is that most refugees can be job-ready in six weeks to six months". Thereafter the refugee is expected to obtain a job, which will often be menial, and combine this with part-time ESL.¹ The job will provide work experience and exercise and extend language skills in the workplace. Two or three years after arrival, the refugee is ready for a programme of vocational training which Stein recommends, although acknowledging the considerable doubts which have been expressed about the value of such programmes. One theme running through Stein's recommendations is his concern that refugees may become

¹ English as a Second Language.

welfare-dependent. He suggests that many refugees refuse to work and points out that refugees under the haphazard system then operating in the United States could spend two or three years in ESL classes and training programmes, emerging no better off than those who have been employed. Stein puts forward the implicit threat of refugees 'going on welfare' as a means of persuading policy-makers to support a more systematic approach to refugee resettlement:

If there is a fully operational system of job-readiness services and language training plus follow-up, upgrading, training, night-ESL, and counselling, then the refugee community's advice to go on welfare and wait for training is wrong and fraught with disaster. It can lead to welfare dependency, host community hostility, and backlash, can price resettlement out of the market, and put future refugee programs in peril. If, however, "front-end loading" is a slogan rather than a program, if the range of needed services from arrival to as much as five years later is spotty, absent, inadequate, or unreliable, then the refugee community's advice to refuse jobs, stay on welfare, learn and train, while still faulty, may be sound advice from their perspective.

Stein's argument has a shrewd political appeal, but it must be noted that it is based on a limited amount of often anecdotal evidence about the behaviour of the Vietnamese refugees. In Britain the JCRV (1982) have described a tendency on the part of some Vietnamese refugees to regard an unrealistically high standard of English as the only route to a job. A contrasting finding on the tendency of refugees to embrace welfare-dependence was mentioned above; Weiermair found that Hungarian refugees in Canada were more likely to take menial jobs as an alternative to unemployment than were other immigrants. More generally, Stein's recommendations for a resettlement programme are presented plausibly and forcefully, and the principles behind them command adherence, but the details and time-scales are supported by only very meagre evidence.

5 The geography of refugee resettlement

The decision about where to resettle refugees, following an initial period in a reception centre, is central to resettlement policy, for it will determine the particular social environment with which the refugees will have to come to terms. Location will affect the availability of services, particularly ESL provision, the strength and weakness of local voluntary support for the refugees, the prospects for jobs, and the presence or absence of others of the same ethnic group (often also refugees).

A few decades ago it was widely assumed that immigrants into Western countries should and would 'assimilate', rapidly losing their distinctiveness in favour of the culture and way of life of the majority. A corollary of this perspective was the view that resettling refugees should be dispersed around the country to facilitate their assimilation. Davie (1947) argued the point in connection with the resettlement of post-war refugees in the United States:

A high degree of concentration draws undue attention to a group, like the Japanese in California and the Jews in New York, often retards assimilation, and sometimes gives rise to fear, dislike, and other unfavourable reactions. A wide distribution, on the other hand, frequently facilitates the incorporation of immigrants into American society and lessens the strain on intergroup relations.

In Britain the Hungarian refugees of 1956 were resettled in an attempt to avoid 'concentration of large groups of Hungarians in any one area' (Levin, 1981). In Australia too, strong pressure was put on post-war refugees to assimilate rapidly (Murphy, 1955).

In recent years views have changed. Assimilation for ethnic minority groups and immigrants, or at least government pressure for such assimilation, is now widely rejected, and in its place there is an increased emphasis on the value of the distinctive cultures and traditions of ethnic minority groups both to the members of those groups and to society as a whole. Partly as a byproduct of this changed perspective on race relations generally, policies of dispersal for refugees have been increasingly criticised for preventing the development of viable refugee communities. The refugee community, it is argued, provides the basic framework for refugees' efforts to help themselves. Chapter 6 will describe how many commentators have argued, on the basis of at least some evidence, that mental health problems among refugees would be considerably alleviated by stronger social ties within particular refugee communities. Rogg (1974) in a study of Cuban refugees in the United States, argues that a strong

refugee community plays a fundamental role in integrating individual refugees into employment. Rogg also develops a useful theoretical model to explain the role of a refugee community for its members. She distinguishes two features in the social life of immigrants: 'acculturation' and 'adjustment'. Acculturation is understood as the learning and acceptance of the customs of the receiving society; adjustment reflects the immigrant's ability to handle the new social environment effectively, as well as subjective contentment with the new country. On the basis of a survey of Cuban refugees living in West New York, she argues that a strong ethnic minority community may slow acculturation in the short run but significantly reduce the adjustment problems of its members. She claims that more rapid acculturation would be 'unmanageable' for the refugees.

It is possible to argue that if refugees are given the chance to immerse themselves in the refugee community, they will not readily emerge from its protective hold and make a success of life in wider society. Some concern was expressed over this issue in connection with the resettlement of Vietnamese in Britain. In one of the voluntary agencies dispersal was justified as a move to counteract 'the severe dangers of overdependency relationships which can create a paternalism where the person concerned is never able to leave home' (quoted by Levin, 1981). However the available evidence tends not to support this view. One research study suggests that blacks with a stronger sense of their own ethnic identity have a more friendly attitude toward the white majority (Bagley and Verma, 1975). The Ugandan Asian refugees who belong to a variety of closely knit ethnic minority communities have made considerable economic progress in Britain. The Jewish community in Britain — a number of them refugees — provide another example. Strong bonds within an ethnic minority community seem to be quite compatible with successful and harmonious relationships with the majority.

Perhaps the strongest and simplest evidence for the desirability of strong refugee communities is that this appears to be what many refugees themselves want. One way this appears is in the widely described and perhaps unfortunately strong attachment of refugees for resettlement centres (see for example Kuepper *et al*, 1976; Beach and Ragvald, 1982). Pfister-Ammende (1960) describes how during the Second World War the Swiss were shocked by the way the many Soviet Russians living in Switzerland spent much of their money visiting one another in remote parts of the country. This same refugee group often refused transfer from overcrowded camps to better housing because they wanted to be with fellow members of their group. Elsewhere she quotes one refugee as saying "I don't want to be where it is nice but where my comrades are" (Zwingmann and Pfister-Ammende, 1973). Davie (1947), in a study of post-war refugees in Philadelphia, reports that over half the refugee families settled in Philadelphia because they had relatives there, while less than a quarter mentioned employment and other opportunities as their main reason. Gitelman (1976) describes how Israeli officials resettling Georgian Jews found

that living in close proximity to relatives was more important to Georgians than living in higher standard housing; they consequently abandoned their original dispersal policy and permitted settlement in concentrated groups. The magnet of the geographically concentrated community will be particularly strong if communities of the relevant ethnic group are already present when a refugee group enters the country. Six out of ten Hungarian refugees entering the United States following the 1956 uprising settled themselves in the four North Eastern states which in 1950 had contained three quarters of the Hungarian-born population of the United States (Taft *et al*, 1979). In successive small scale studies of Ugandan Asian refugee families in Britain the Community Relations Commission (1974, 1976) report that fewer of those who made their own settlement arrangements (in most cases within an existing Asian community) felt that they were likely to move as compared with those who had been resettled by the Uganda Resettlement Board (in most cases away from such communities). Moreover the main reason for wishing to move given by families resettled by the Board was their wish to avoid isolation.

There is also much evidence that if refugees are dispersed around the country initially, in a few years secondary migration will result in the formation of concentrations of refugees in particular places. Despite a variety of Federal measures, Cuban refugees tended to concentrate in particular parts of the United States, notably in Miami. Taft *et al*, (1979) conclude that it is difficult to disperse a population which does not wish to disperse itself. The voluntary agencies in the United States appear to concur, arguing that at least when refugees state geographical preferences for resettlement (on the grounds of nearness to kin or friends) there is little point in trying to settle them elsewhere; it will only result in needless secondary migration. Vietnamese refugees who came to the United States in 1975 were initially dispersed. Much secondary migration has subsequently occurred, principally towards areas of existing heavy settlement in the South and West (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1981). Stein (1980) goes so far as to imply that the initial dispersal policy resulted, following secondary migration, in denser concentrations of refugees in particular areas than would have occurred if they had been settled in clusters initially. Levin (1981) describes how refugees who came to Britain from Chile have tended to drift to London or towards areas with greater Chilean and Latin American settlement. Among Ugandan Asians the CRC (1976) recorded "a drift of officially resettled refugees away from their original places of settlement in dispersed areas towards areas with concentrations of East African settlers in search of community support". Among refugees from Vietnam in Britain, Ward (1982) has recorded increasing secondary migration toward large urban areas, particularly London and Birmingham, where there are already many Vietnamese refugees. The refugees' main reason for moving was to join relatives and friends, and secondly to search for employment. In Sweden there has been some tendency for refugees from Vietnam to move to the Helsingborg-Malmö area, despite its high rate of unemployment. Malmö contains a large concentration of refugees from Vietnam, and Vietnamese food, medicines and video films are available there.

Quite apart from the fact that it may undo any long term aims of a dispersal policy, secondary migration can have intrinsically undesirable effects. Volunteer support groups may lose touch with refugees who move, and in areas where refugees are increasingly concentrated — often inner city areas — voluntary support may be lacking and statutory services hard pressed. A series of reports by the California Department of Social Services (1979, 1980) has highlighted this last problem in the parts of California where Vietnamese refugees have become congregated, and has argued for more financial support for these areas.

Delivering Services

The geographical pattern of resettlement also has significant implications for service delivery. Jones (1982) reports that volunteers involved in the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees were generally in favour of a dispersal policy, since they felt it necessary to spread the burden of the resettlement effort to groups of volunteers across the country. One 'service' which inevitably has a major role in determining settlement patterns is the availability of housing. Given the virtual absence of a private rented sector in the housing market, resettlement agencies have relied on voluntary and piecemeal offers of housing by particular local authorities and such offers of housing inevitably come from a wide spread of local authorities around the country. Levin points out that many local authorities are unwilling to make offers of housing unless local volunteer support for the refugees is available; the spread of housing offers may therefore depend not only on the limited flexibility of any particular local authority, but also on the dispersal of volunteer support. Moreover reliance on areas with surplus housing can generate further problems. As Kuepper *et al*, (1976) noted in connection with the Ugandan Asians:

Those regions in Britain which had a surplus of public housing generally had a high rate of unemployment, while those areas with job opportunities were, in many cases, those with severe housing shortages.

The dispersal of a refugee group can impede the delivery of services to those refugees. There may be too few refugees within a particular area to give any prominence to the issue of refugee needs, and to justify special language tuition or other provision, or the employment of a specially trained worker within a local authority. The JCRV (1982) argued that the dispersal of refugees from Vietnam made it difficult for them to take advantage of ESL schemes funded under section 11 of the Local Government Act or through the Urban Programme, since such schemes tend to be concentrated in inner city areas and areas of existing ethnic minority concentration. (As mentioned, the needs of Vietnamese refugees are in any case not part of the formal justification of section 11 provision.) It is claimed that refugee support groups will also find difficulties in remaining in contact with a widely dispersed group of refugees. Commercial services too, often provided from within the refugee community,

may be adversely affected by the dispersal of refugees. Shops selling the food liked in the refugee community, and newsletters or papers directed at the refugees will not be economically viable unless there is a community of a reasonable size within one locality. The CRC report that most of the Ugandan Asian refugee families who settled themselves (mainly in existing areas of Asian residence) had easy access to Asian food, films, and facilities for religious worship. Most of the families settled by the Uganda Resettlement Board (mainly in dispersed areas) had no easy access to any of these Asian community services.

Summarising these points, there are advantages in spreading the burden of service delivery as widely as possible and this tends to argue for refugee dispersal, but services can usually be delivered more efficiently if refugees are concentrated around particular points of service delivery. This dilemma is not wholly insoluble. If central government were prepared to play a more prominent role, providing services itself or funding services provided by local authorities or voluntary agencies, then refugees could be concentrated in particular areas where services could be readily provided for them while the costs of doing so could be shared by all taxpayers. Assuming that housing could be obtained for the refugees, the major disadvantage of such a course is that it would severely limit the role of volunteers who would be difficult to recruit in great numbers within the small areas chosen for resettlement.

Alternative policies: clustering refugees to create communities

The line of least resistance in implementing a policy of refugee resettlement involves relying on voluntary offers of housing and local volunteer help — and this implies dispersal. Any attempt to place refugees in particular areas would require quite complex administrative mechanisms to obtain housing and other services for the refugees in those areas. Establishing such mechanisms in a short space of time in the face of an unexpected refugee emergency may present considerable difficulties. However, given the weighty arguments described above in favour of concentrating refugees, there is reason at least to think through, in advance, the kind of mechanisms, procedures and problems which would be involved in settling a future influx of refugees in particular parts of the country. It would certainly involve agreements between central government and the local authorities in areas where the refugee group is to be resettled. As part of these agreements, central government would have to provide financial incentives and support to the local authorities who are to provide housing and educational and other services to the refugees. In the case of refugees from the New Commonwealth, however, some of this central government support would naturally fall under the heading of section 11 of the Local Government Act, and so a special scheme might be limited in scope to initial incentives to local authorities to accept and house the refugees. Volunteer support for the resettled refugees would inevitably be limited, and it

would be necessary to employ resettlement workers during the first few years to carry out the work normally carried out by volunteer support groups. Funding for such posts would have to be provided mainly by central government, although they might work to a local authority or voluntary agency. Sweden provides posts of this type in support of its resettlement programme, describing the postholders as 'family pedagogs' (Beach and Ragvald, 1982). Resettlement on this basis would involve greater costs for central government during the period after refugees have left reception centres. This might partly be offset by the greater efficiency involved in delivering services to a concentrated group. However it is arguable that the most important long term financial benefit to government would be in the creation of the right environment for a self-supporting refugee community, less in need of government services and benefits in the long term.

This last point is crucial. It should be noted that geographical concentration is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the formation of a community, bound together by tight social bonds. The many ethnic, religious, class and other social differences within refugee groups have been emphasised, and these differences will limit the formation of social bonds within any community. These considerations suggest various policy options. First, in the case of a refugee emergency where a number of countries of reception are involved, it may be possible to limit the intake into any one country to a relatively homogeneous group. Sweden attempted (without complete success) to limit its intake of refugees from Vietnam to those of Chinese ethnic origin. Within a country of resettlement, attempts can be made to ensure reasonable homogeneity in the groups of refugees settled in particular places. Beach and Ragvald (1982) describe what has occurred in Sweden:

In order to organise the services for the Indochinese refugees most effectively, some communities have sought to obtain as homogeneous a group as possible with the same ethnic identity, same language. Some communities have obtained relatively homogeneous groups as a matter of luck; others have managed to secure themselves relatively homogeneous groups by their own efforts or as the result of selective recruitment by employers. Other communities have decidedly heterogeneous groups with accompanying problems.

In the United States, the state of Iowa, (which acted like a voluntary agency directly as a resettlement organisation) focused its resettlement efforts on one group of refugees from South East Asia — the black Thai. Probably as a result there was far less secondary migration of refugees from Iowa than from other states (North *et al*, 1982). Nevertheless a relatively homogeneous social group, placed together, will take time to form what we think of as a 'community'. Shared experience, and the lack of other social contacts, may allow links to be more rapidly formed within refugee communities. Refugees sometimes have to be coaxed into leaving reception centres where social interaction with other refugees was possible. Braham and Fenwick (1981) report that of a sample of

refugee families resettled by the Ockenden Venture in Britain, nearly half mixed 'very much' with other Vietnamese in their locality (where there were any) and only 10 per cent mixed 'not at all'. It will naturally take time for social 'mixing' to lead to more durable bonds between people.

These very broad considerations leave open many detailed questions about the geographical conditions most favourable to the formation of refugee communities. If a 'clustering' policy were implemented, decisions would have to be taken about the number of refugee households in any one cluster, and their degree of propinquity. The availability of public transport must be considered, particularly given that few refugees will initially have access to private means of transport. Questions also arise about the relative desirability of urban and rural centres for the resettlement of refugees. Although much secondary migration tends to take place towards the larger areas, this could be because this is the natural way of forming community links among refugees, as much as because of any intrinsic desirability of urban areas. Much may depend on the type of area in which the refugees lived in the countries of origin. In Sweden, most refugees resettled in small towns (usually in small clusters of families) did not contemplate migration to more urban areas, despite the fact that many of them lived in urban areas in Vietnam. They appreciated the consideration and friendliness they received in small towns, and felt that the larger Swedish cities could not in any real sense recreate the urban social environment of Vietnam (Beach and Ragvald, 1982).

6 Refugees and mental health

A great deal of research has been carried out on the mental health of migrants and refugees. Some of the main themes in this literature will be summarised here, with particular attention to issues relevant to resettlement policies.

The psychology of the refugee experience has been discussed already. In this context, it is worth distinguishing between, on the one hand, widespread psychological problems experienced by refugees (and other groups), including sub-clinical anxiety and depression, and, on the other hand, severe conditions in smaller numbers of individuals requiring psychiatric care. This distinction underlines the fact that a high rate of a particular mental illness within a refugee group need not imply that the whole group suffers a milder form of the same disorder.

Migrants and mental illness

Much of the research on the relation of migration to mental illness has rested on comparisons of mental hospital admission rates as between immigrants and the native-born. These have often showed higher rates of admission for the immigrants. One of the earliest studies, carried out by Odegaard (1932) found that, among Norwegian immigrants to the state of Minnesota, admission rates to mental hospitals were higher than for persons born in the United States and also higher than among Norwegians living in Norway. Studies by Malzberg (1956), Lemert (1948), Locke *et al* (1960), Malzberg (1964, 1968), Lee (1963), Listwan (1959) and Krupinski and Stoller (1965) suggest that immigrants to the United States, Canada and Australia are more prone to mental illness than the native-born. In Britain Kieve (1965) and Hemsli (1967) have suggested that West Indian immigrants are more prone to many types of psychiatric disorder than the indigenous population, although Pinsent (1963) and Bagley (1969) present contrary findings.

Many of the more recent and methodologically sophisticated studies in the field have allowed for the effect of the different age, sex, and occupational composition of immigrant population groups. This has, in general, tended to reduce the apparent difference in rates of mental illness between immigrants and the general population. There are some indications that in some migrant groups at least, women may be particularly vulnerable (Sanua, 1969). Other research has shown marked differences between immigrants of different national origins in respect of mental illness, and it appears that certain migrant

groups may even suffer less from certain kinds of mental illness than the indigenous population; Australian Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (1961), Roberts and Myers (1954), Jaco (1960), Lazarus *et al* (1963), Murphy (1968), Bagley (1969), Murphy (1961).

It is hardly surprising that a wide variety of results are obtained from studies of this type, as it is extremely difficult to isolate the effect of migration from the myriad of other factors which may be responsible for mental illness. There are two major difficulties here. In the first place, most research studies in the field compare rates of hospitalisation for immigrants with those of the indigenous population. Different rates of mental illness might be related to different tendencies toward mental illness in the ethnic groups concerned, rather than to migration. Unless comparisons with the country of origin prove otherwise, this type of explanation remains a possibility. Secondly, administrative statistics governing rates of hospitalisation are unreliable guides to the real prevalence of mental illness. The availability and proximity of mental hospitals has been shown to affect rates of hospitalisation for mental illness (Sanua, 1969). Ethnic groups differ in their willingness to seek psychiatric help, not least because of differing perceptions of what counts as a psychiatric problem. Aylesworth *et al* (1980) describe how Vietnamese refugees in the United States have wholly different conceptions of mental health from those which obtain locally.

In recent years many psychiatrists have questioned the idea that all mental illnesses are analogous to somatic disorders. Instead they argue that 'mental illness' is a label attached to people whose behaviour is in some way seen as deviant, unusual or undesirable. This is not to say that mental illness does not exist, but it does imply that it is more closely analogous to a socially and culturally relative concept such as crime, rather than to one which is not so relative, such as organic illness. One corollary of this view is that there are particular problems of diagnosis when faced with the different cultural assumptions of an ethnic minority group. A particular danger is that racial, cultural or linguistic differences will increase the migrant's chance of being mistakenly diagnosed as mentally ill. This is possible if diagnoses are conducted on an ethnocentric basis, whereby behaviour which is culturally alien to the psychiatrist is perceived as bizarre and hence pathological. The school of psychiatric thought which in Britain has identified itself as 'Trans-cultural Psychiatry' has drawn much of its impetus from this line of thought (see for example Littlewood and Lipsedge, 1982). Here this issue can only be referred to, but it should be noted that it raises yet another doubt over whether rates of diagnosis and hospitalisation for mental illness among refugees and migrants can be held to accurately reflect the real extent of psychiatric problems in the relevant communities.

The majority of studies in this field suggest that international migrants are more likely to suffer mental illness than are non-migrants; however two

qualifications are clearly necessary. First, certain migrant groups appear to have lower rates of mental illness than non-migrants. Second, the evidence in this field must be treated with particular caution, given the methodological problems referred to above.

Explanations and their relevance to refugees

Refugees are a type of migrant. To see how the evidence on migration and mental illness bears on refugees, it is necessary to consider the possible explanations of the findings concerning migrants. If international migrants are more prone to mental illness, there are, as a matter of logic, two possible explanations. Actually or potentially mentally ill persons are more likely to migrate, or migration has some tendency to make people mentally ill. They are not mutually exclusive. Both lines of argument have their proponents in the literature, but there is little empirical evidence available to determine how much weight to attach to the competing explanations. If mental illness makes people migrate, then a lower prevalence of mental illness would be expected among refugees than among voluntary migrants; refugees do not usually select themselves for migration. Conversely, if migration makes people mentally ill, a higher rate of mental illness would be expected among refugees than among ordinary migrants, since most of the stresses which attach to migration will be greater for refugees than for ordinary migrants. If migration itself is a cause of mental illness, there is strong reason to believe that refugees will be particularly vulnerable.

Apart from the stress of involuntary migration in itself, some refugees have often had extremely traumatic experiences during and preceding their flights. They may have experienced torture or rape, or have witnessed close relatives or friends undergoing similar experiences. Such events are not readily forgotten and they will take their psychological toll.

Evidence of mental illness among refugee groups

Direct empirical evidence tends to support the view that refugees are particularly vulnerable to mental illness. Murphy (1955) carried out a major study of Eastern European refugees in Britain during the immediate post-war years. He reports that within each age and sex group, admissions to mental hospitals were substantially higher among the refugees than for the indigenous population. Although perhaps 90% of these refugees were single, and single people are known to be up to three times more likely to be the victims of mental illness, Murphy argues (not entirely convincingly) that this factor is inadequate to explain rates of admission to mental hospital two or three times as high as the indigenous population. He also points out that Eastern European migrants — as opposed to refugees — to the United States do not show particularly high rates of hospitalisation, and argues that the high rates of mental illness found

among Eastern European refugees in Britain are attributable to their status as refugees. Jewish and Eastern European refugees who settled in Western countries during the 1930s and 1940s appear a particularly vulnerable group; Malzberg (1964), Krupinski *et al* (1973), Eitinger (1959). Studies of later refugee groups are fewer. Mezey (1960 a,b,) studied mental illness among Hungarian refugees who came to Britain following the 1956 uprising. He argued that Hungarians who presented symptoms of mental disorder in Britain had often shown signs of disturbance in Hungary. Among refugees from Vietnam, there is again a strong consensus that they suffer serious mental health problems, but there is not a greater deal of hard empirical evidence, since most studies concentrate on the psychiatric problems which arise in refugees, and their possible explanation, rather than on the prevalence of psychiatric problems in the refugee community.

The form of mental illness among refugees

Murphy (1955) in Britain and Krupinski *et al* (1973) in Australia report that East European refugees had higher proportionate rates of schizophrenia than the indigenous populations. Paranoid states, including paranoid schizophrenia, have also been frequently described in refugee and migrant populations (Tyhurst, 1951; Eitinger, 1959; Mezey, 1960 a,b; Kino, 1951; Levin, 1981). Aylesworth *et al* (1980) found that Vietnamese refugees were more likely to present the less serious mental disorders. Levin has also described depression manifested in suicide, emotional outbursts, restlessness, withdrawal, grief and psychosomatic disorders. Among migrants a number of studies have described states of 'nostalgia' or intense homesickness (Rosen, 1975; Fried, 1964; Levin, 1981). Symptoms of this type tend to support the theory that migration is a cause of psychological stress rather than its result.

There is equally patchy evidence on the timing of mental illness following refugee migration. Among migrants generally, Malzberg (1956) and Krupinski *et al* (1965) report a particular risk in the first year after migration. In Britain Levin (1981) reports the view of resettlement workers that depression often sets in about four months after arrival. In a study carried out in a reception centre for Vietnamese refugees in the United States, Rahe *et al* (1978) report that most of the refugees were in good spirits on arrival. In the first months after arrival some refugees were seen for serious psychiatric problems, thereafter anxiety and depression became more common. Tyhurst (1951) in a study of 48 'displaced persons' in Canada found that the refugees went through an initial period, lasting some months, of euphoria and relief, followed by a longer period during which the refugee becomes increasingly aware of the social world that has been lost, and the gulf between that world and their resettlement environment. In a later survey of clinical experience with a wide variety of refugee groups in Canada, Tyhurst (1977) argues that a certain pattern is common in refugees who become mentally ill. A two-month period following arrival is free of symptoms, but paranoiacal and hypo-

chondriacal symptoms together with anxiety and depression become increasingly frequent, reaching a peak about six months after entry. Thereafter the refugees may become disorientated, moody, their social skills are impaired and they may become withdrawn.

Mental illness and resettlement policies

The final and critical question is whether resettlement policies could be modified so as to minimise the extent of mental illness among refugees. As described, it has been argued that two kinds of experience might make refugees more prone to mental illness — traumatic events previous to and during flight, and the experience, following arrival in the country of resettlement, of having lost the social world to which the refugee belongs. Resettlement policies cannot affect the first kind of experience, since they occur outside the country of resettlement. However such policies can have a major influence on the second kind of experience — the cultural shock of a new environment.

In a number of research studies it has been argued that a strong refugee community will minimise mental health problems among members of that community, and help to cope with and resolve such problems where they occur. Murphy (1955) claims that 'social and cultural isolation' is 'probably the major factor in producing excess mental disorder in refugees'. In a later survey of immigrant groups in a number of countries, Murphy (1965) found that there are fewer mental health problems where the immigrant group forms a significant proportion of the local population, and where they are not subject to excessive pressure to adopt the language and customs of the receiving country; in other words conditions which encourage the preservation of an ethnic minority community have a positive value in mental health. Bagley (1968), on the basis of a study of immigrants in London, reports that ethnic groups with well-developed communities are less likely to be prone to mental illness. Research on Vietnamese refugees in the United States supports this view; Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (1979), Okura (1980), Tran Minh Tung (1975), and Robinson (1980).

This evidence suggests two lines of approach to the alleviation of mental health problems in refugee groups. First, the customs and institutions of the new country can be explained to refugees, a new language can be taught, and persons who work with refugees can be trained so that they do not ride roughshod over the customs of the refugee group. Second, the development of communities among refugee groups can be encouraged and facilitated, so that the refugee community partially recreates the way of life in the country of origin. In principle, such measures may make the new world less threatening and more manageable, while preserving part of the old world.

7 Conclusion

There is widespread agreement that the formulation of policies for refugee resettlement can be considerably assisted by information about experience with different refugee groups in different countries of resettlement; the resettlement of a particular refugee group is not a unique event. However, most of the literature on refugees which exists is of limited value in formulating policies for refugee resettlement in any one country like Britain. A great deal of it is narrative or anecdotal in form, describing a particular resettlement effort with very little attempt to evaluate whether the particular approach to resettlement in question represented a success or failure. Other survey-based research on refugees is more rigorous, but while an interview survey of a particular refugee group often tells us much about that group, it reveals only a limited amount about the resettlement policy in use. The enormous variations between refugee groups tend to drown out the factors specific to status as a refugee, and to obscure those which can be related to particular resettlement policy. A considerable volume of systematic research on refugees and mental health has been conducted, but there are deep methodological problems and this issue is in any case marginal to the central issues in resettlement policy. There is no shortage of generalisations in the literature about refugees and resettlement, but a significant proportion of them are backed by only tenuous evidence.

Amidst a literature which is generally inconclusive, a series of findings stand out which have wider relevance. Foremost among these are those which refer to the refugee community, its role in facilitating resettlement, and the implications this has for the geographical pattern of resettlement. Central to the experience of a refugee is the loss of a social world, and if that social world can be partly recreated in the shape of a strong refugee community in the country of resettlement, it can have considerable practical and psychological advantages for the refugee. Perhaps the most important consideration is that such communities appear to be what refugees themselves want, for even when a particular group of refugees is dispersed on resettlement, the refugees tend to re-migrate to form concentrated communities. Where a community of the same ethnic group as the arriving refugees already exists in the receiving country, there will already exist foci around which refugee communities will form. Attempts to disperse such groups (such as occurred with the Ugandan Asians) are likely to be particularly difficult. In the past, groups of refugees have been dispersed around the country, partly on the grounds that this would facilitate integration and partly for pragmatic reasons (mainly connected with

the availability of housing). Even if theoretical and long term considerations favour the concentration of refugees in particular areas, as has been argued here, these more pragmatic considerations will remain central to the formulation of resettlement policy. Housing must be obtained for the refugees — almost certainly from local authorities — and volunteer or paid resettlement workers must be found. Unless special arrangements are made to obtain the housing and resettlement support, the natural tendency of a resettlement policy will be to disperse refugees in a relatively haphazard manner to locations where housing and voluntary support are offered. It is the argument of this report that the alternative of making special arrangements at least deserves consideration, although the merits of such an approach will naturally depend on the characteristics of any particular refugee flow. Where an influx of refugees is substantial and takes place over a relatively short period of time, there is a risk that reliance on voluntary offers of housing for resettlement will involve lengthy periods in reception centres for many refugees while waiting for resettlement places. The heavy costs involved in running reception centres mean that there is an added incentive to obtain resettlement places (housing and resettlement support) by systematic means in such cases.

Looking to the future, there is some risk of being over-impressed by the example of refugees from Vietnam, where there was no community of the same ethnic group present in this country before the arrival of the refugees. Given the relatively cosmopolitan nature of British society, and the fact that the ethnic mix of British society reflects overseas British connections and responsibilities, it seems likely that future influxes of refugees will frequently find a community of the same ethnic group already present in Britain, as was the case with the Ugandan Asians. Planning for possible future influxes of refugees needs to take account of this probability.

Most of the human resources — the expertise, experience and commitment — available for resettling refugees in Britain rest within voluntary agencies. Any resettlement effort will have to consider how to make best use of these resources. While this report cannot attempt to assess any particular problems associated with British voluntary agencies, it aims to summarise the points which emerge in the American and British literature. A large proportion of the criticisms made of the role of voluntary agencies — the failure to co-ordinate policies within and between agencies, the wide variations in service provision, the lack of central support for resettlement workers — imply management failures. There is nothing in the nature of a voluntary organisation, or of volunteer work, that entails an un-coordinated and decentralised approach. Where such management failures exist therefore, there is good reason to suppose that they can be rectified.

The role of voluntary agencies in resettling refugees must be a transitional one, of handing over the job of helping refugees to the specialist agencies responsible for delivering services to refugees among other citizens in the longer term. This is partly because of the necessary role of bodies — from

schools to social work departments — in dealing with refugees, partly because of the limited resources of refugee voluntary agencies and partly because many of the longer term problems of refugees are better tackled within the framework of other social policies — particularly policies concerned with ethnic minority groups more generally. The transitional role of voluntary agencies is served by guiding the refugees to specialist agencies delivering services — mainly a task for volunteer support groups — and by drawing the attention of these agencies to the refugee groups and their needs — mainly a promotional task for the salaried staff of the voluntary agencies. The recognition of this role demands effective liaison between the voluntary agencies and other institutions, and this reinforces the point made about the management of the agencies. There are good arguments for employing resettlement workers who share language and ethnic origin with a refugee group. Given that interpreting services will often be essential, and the fact that the role of interpreter almost inevitably becomes extended into that of a giver of advice, there are strong reasons for formalising this process so that persons from the refugee community are trained as resettlement workers. However there are risks attached to the use of refugees in this role. In the first place it is doubtful whether the simple possession of refugee status is a major qualification for resettlement work, particularly with a different group of refugees. Secondly, there are risks that divisions and conflict within a refugee group will affect the work of a refugee with members of the same group.

While the literature on the training and employment of refugees is largely inconclusive, it does highlight a central policy problem in the resettlement of refugees. Long term welfare support for a refugee group is enormously expensive to the state, but within the framework of government policy it need not be separately funded or justified. Special training and employment programmes for resettled refugees, although initially expensive, might reduce the overall costs of resettling refugees in the long term, by improving the employment prospects of the refugees; however such programmes do require separate justification and funding. These considerations refer to the costs of a resettlement effort borne by the receiving country. Refugees will benefit substantially from schemes designed to help them obtain employment, and, conversely, suffer considerably if they are forced to rely on state benefits in the longer term, and these considerations add weight to the arguments for some kind of front-end loading. This is an issue which Britain can ill-afford to ignore, given that with present levels of unemployment it is inevitably difficult for newly-arrived refugees to obtain jobs.

All these arguments are ones of principle. There is little systematic research evidence regarding the effectiveness of training schemes or of other employment initiatives designed to assist refugees in entering the labour market. What can be said is that there is a clear need to look closely at the kind of schemes likely to prove most effective. More generally, the employment of refugees, and the means of helping them to obtain employment, represents a field where more research is needed. A recent report on the employment situation of

refugees in Western Europe is a useful first step in this direction (Centre for Employment Initiatives, 1984).

The relatively well-researched field of refugees and mental health was surveyed in Chapter 6. While much of this field is of limited relevance to the development of resettlement policy, it is the consensus of many professionals in the field that a strong refugee community will tend to minimise mental health problems in the members of that community. This view tends to support arguments for a resettlement policy, as discussed above, which would facilitate the development of such communities. The refugee experience is often traumatic, and within any refugee group there will be psychiatric casualties. The empirical evidence tends to support this view, although methodological problems afflict most of the research studies in the field, (and, more generally, there are conceptual and practical difficulties in the identification and treatment of mental illness in ethnic minority groups). However, if the events which precipitate mental illness took place in the country of origin or during flight, resettlement policy may have only a limited role in mitigating psychiatric problems. Mental illness, even if disproportionately high in refugee groups, afflicts only a small proportion of the population.

This is not to argue that mental illness is an issue which can be ignored when resettling refugees. It is clearly important to ensure that psychiatric services are available to refugees who are likely to need them. The first requirement, as with nearly all services to refugees, is the availability of an interpreter when necessary. Within the psychiatric profession the movement which has concerned itself with the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in migrant and ethnic minority groups deserves encouragement, as it is within this context that the psychiatric problems which tend to afflict refugee groups can best be answered. For resettlement workers generally, while there should be an awareness of the issue, there is a danger in forming a stereotyped image of the kind of mental illness liable to afflict refugees, given that the evidence on this point is far from conclusive. While resettlement workers need to offer general emotional support to refugees, and to refer individuals to their General Practitioners if clinical symptoms are suspected, there are obvious dangers in attempting any kind of amateur psychotherapy.

This report has identified certain key themes in the literature — the role of the refugee community is the most prominent example. In other areas which are of paramount policy importance, such as the means used to train refugees for employment and obtain jobs for them, the literature is sparse and lacking in hard evidence. Moreover the narrative descriptions of the experiences of different refugee groups in different countries, which are common in the literature, provide few unambiguous lessons for British resettlement policy. The major gap in the research literature on refugees is systematic evidence of the comparative effectiveness of different approaches to resettlement, including training and employment schemes. It is in this area that future research might usefully be concentrated.

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